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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/932,061	08/17/2001	Douglas Michael Hannan	50019.77US01/P05030	4508
23552	7590	12/01/2004	EXAMINER	
MERCHANT & GOULD PC P.O. BOX 2903 MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55402-0903			NGUYEN, HAI L	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			2816	

DATE MAILED: 12/01/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/932,061

Applicant(s)

HANNAN ET AL.

Examiner

Hai L. Nguyen

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 30 January 2002.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-13 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-3, 5-13 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 4 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 17 August 2001 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 1/30/2002
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

1. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

2. Claims 1-3 and 5-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

3. Claims 1-3 and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being incomplete for omitting essential elements, such omission amounting to a gap between the elements. See MPEP § 2172.01. The omitted elements are: the level shifter circuits (420a, 420b in instant Fig. 4) and the integrators (430a, 430b). In order for the apparatus to detect a fault condition in a differential signal having a valid common-mode voltage, those omitted elements need to be included in the claims.

4. Claims 5-9 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being incomplete for omitting essential steps, such omission amounting to a gap between the steps. See MPEP § 2172.01. The omitted steps are: the level shifting step and the integrating step. In order for the method for detecting a fault condition in a differential signal having a valid common-mode voltage, those omitted steps need to be included in the claims.

5. Claims 10 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being incomplete for omitting essential elements, such omission amounting to a gap between the elements. See MPEP § 2172.01. The omitted elements are: the level shifter circuits (420a, 420b in instant Fig. 4) and the integrators (430a, 430b). In order for the apparatus to detect a fault

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condition in a differential signal having a valid common-mode voltage, those omitted elements need to be included in the claims.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

6. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

7. Claims 1, 2, 5-8, and 10-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Nakagawara (US 6,486,695).

With regard to claims 1 and 5, Nakagawara discloses in Fig. 1 an apparatus, and a method of use thereof, for detecting a fault condition in a differential signal having a valid common-mode voltage, comprising an input buffer circuit (Rb1, Vb1, Rb2, Vb2) that is arranged to produce a first buffered signal and second buffered signal in response to the differential signal; a first comparator circuit (Comp1) that is arranged to produce a first signal in response to the first buffered signal and a first reference signal (Vref1); a second comparator circuit (Comp2) that is arranged to produce a second signal in response to a second buffered signal and second reference signal (Vref2); and an output circuit (3, 4) that is arranged to produce a fault detection signal in response to the first signal and the second signal, whereby the fault detection signal indicates the fault condition that is due to open condition (see column 4, lines 1-61).

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With regard to claims 2 and 6, the reference also meets the recited limitations in these claims (see column 4, lines 52-61).

Claim 10 is similarly rejected; note the above discussion with regard to claims 1 and 5.

With regard to claims 7, 8, 11, 12, and 13, the reference also meets the recited limitations in these claims.

Allowable Subject Matter

8. Claim 4 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The prior art of record fails to disclose or fairly suggest a specific structural limitations, as recited in claim 4, such as the integrator (600 in instant Fig. 6) includes a level shifter circuit (M12, I3) and a capacitance circuit (602), the level shifter providing isolation between the input buffer circuit and the capacitance circuit, and the capacitance circuit is arranged to average the first buffered signal; and being configured in combination with the rest of the limitations of the base claims and any intervening claims.

Conclusion

9. Regarding claims 3 and 9, the patentability thereof cannot be determined because of their indefiniteness.

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10. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. For example, Bishop (US Pat. 6,281,699) is cited as of interest because it discloses a Detector with common mode comparator for automatic test equipment circuit.

11. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Hai L. Nguyen whose telephone number is 571-272-1747 and Right Fax number is 571-273-1747. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursdays.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Timothy Callahan can be reached on 571-272-1740. The official fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is 703-872-9306.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 571-272-1562.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

HLN 
November 27, 2004


TIMOTHY P. CALLAHAN
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
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